

The Morning of Myra and the Mystery Novel and Motion Picture Drama

Written by Hereward Carrington.

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Dramatized by Charles W. Goddard.

CHAPTER LVIX. The Master Persists.

His potentate of the Devil Worshipers, enthroned in his inner chamber, regarded Arthur Varney's nervous face with an expression of mingled fury and contempt. Varney, kneeling in humble adoration before the High Master, trembled as though with an ague.

"I have told you my plan. Your remonstrances are vain, Varney! Another speech like that and I shall punish you as I have done with other traitors to our order in the past!" cried the Master.

"The girl must die! Even should you obtain her fortune for me, by marrying her, I will not let her live until I have put her from the land of the living!"

He smote the great brazen gong at his side.

The ceremonial leader entered at the summons, to be greeted by the horn-tubed master with a stern rebuke.

"Your command, O Master?"

"Bring in the man and woman who have bargained to serve us," snarled the Master. Again he addressed Varney whose downcast face was drawn and haggard from some internal struggle between the good and evil of his strange personality.

"But, Master," he pleaded, "if she—"

"I have spoken my will," came the stern response. "She knows entirely too much about our organization, and she is acquiring greater psychic powers than I desire. I must slay her, and Aiden, as well, in order to guard our own brotherhood from the signs of weakness now—and it will be the last you make, in this life Varney. And remember, that you have scores to settle when you are ushered into the existence beyond the grave. I advise you to get all you can get out of this life."

Varney did not reply.

Even as the Master ceased, two figures advanced, guided by the ceremonial leader. The man and woman who were instructed to kneel before him.

The first of the newcomers was a heavy-jawed man with a ruddy complexion and rough features indicated that he had been engaged in outdoor work during much of his life. He wore a simple, unadorned tunic, and his eyes were fixed on the unaccompanied Master, as the red rays radiated from a great luminous disc directly behind the Master's head.

Then another man stepped forward, and at the faces which were all apparently strange to him.

He looked with surprise at the woman at his side. "She was apparently forty years of age or thereabouts. Her heavy, sensual features betokened a nature more crude, and infinitely more cunning, than that of her companion. She regarded the man with curiosity, and returned his stare with an acuteness with a glance of insolent self-confidence.

As Varney, with the same anxious expression upon his tense features, studied them he realized that the villainous couple gave proof of the Master's judgment. Here was a murderer of a looking twin as one could have found after diligent search in the streets of any city.

"Do you understand what I have engaged you to do?" demanded the Master.

Both nodded, and the leader of the Devil Worshipers smiled in silent, crocodile mirth.

The Master began to instruct them in their new duties, and spoke without interruption, until with a significant gesture across his own throat, he ended significantly. "If you do not have the knife! And see that it cuts deep! It cannot cut too deep at him."

"I can use a knife, and use it well!" she exclaimed. "But, poison is quicker and easier!"

The man, whom the Master had addressed as "Pedro," stepped back, apprehensively.

"But I don't want to use the knife, or the poison either. I was told that it's just a kidnaping plan! I don't want no electric chair for all the money I can get!"

The Master glared viciously at Pedro, and cried: "I command you to obey me! I will punish any disobedience!"

"But, Master, he is right!" interrupted Varney. "He will be recognized by Mrs. Maynard, and she knows where you have planned it. Then, there is Aiden, who is always just there one moment and gone the next."

"Will you do as I bid?" cried the Master.

Varney shook his head and Pedro started to the letter. "I will not do it!"

The ruler of the Black Order suddenly raised his arms, extending his bony, claw-like fingers, and shrieking with a terrible scream followed— for it seemed as though forked lightning shot forth from those stiffened digits.

Straight to the breast of Varney and the obstinate Pedro sprang the bolts of living fire.

The men screamed and writhed in agony as they sank miserably to their knees. The woman, regarding them with scorn, laughed and stepped forward. The Master gave her an approving glance and dropped his hands exultantly.

"Will you obey?" he demanded.

"Yes, yes!" groaned the sufferers, as the sparks faded out of their eyes, and they whithered among the blackened to the ceremonial leader.

"Take them out," he commanded. And as a whipper-snapper led them away, he said to the man, for I mistrust them!"

The woman was blindfolded once more, as was Pedro. The black order members led them through a maze of passages to the old stone culvert, which was one of the secret exits of the council rooms.

"Go that way," he commanded, pointing to the north. "Meet the woman at the old house, where you will find the automobile. Hasten, for the time has almost come for our action."

Arthur Varney, with head bowed, next passed into the open air, regarded with scorn by his companions. Weakness in his legs made him stagger, and he fell in the path of the south, where he was regarded as a fallen member, the news of his punishment having been whispered among the brethren in the outer council room.

"Go that way," commanded the ceremonial leader, "and let me see you again!"

The members watched him disappear, until confident that he had not rejoined the untrustworthy Pedro for a possible conference.

The woman was brought forth, her blindfold removed. She was given a final word of instruction. Her brutal face lit up with an unholy light as some gold was slipped into her hand.

"I will earn it, I will earn it!" she gloated. "And I will get more than that!"

Varney walked slowly, lost in a thousand miserable thoughts, as he endeavored to crystallize some plan of action. He recalled that the master had conceived and started the execution of the most cunning of all his plans. It seemed impossible to thwart him without absolutely sacrificing his own life. Yet, so

dear had Myra Maynard become to Arthur Varney that this great offering of love seemed not too much to him now.

His speeding the quiet semi-suburban streets toward the Maynard mansion, Varney reviewed the strange mass of incidents which had passed during the recent months of his association with Myra, when supplied with almost unlimited funds by the High Master, he had forced his attention upon her and her mother, until he had ingratiated himself in the family's good graces.

First, his feeling had been one of selfish ambition, for the girl had been irresistible by the innocent young girl. He knew that she had become ingrained in him; her mother's friendliness was unmistakable, and ever increasing.

And his heart hardened as he thought of the advent of the smiling, confident and ever-gallant Doctor Payson Aiden had changed all these things. He had seen the girl's physician with a growing confidence and a sweet intimacy which infuriated Varney, who had accompanied Myra, and now turned toward the other room, where her mother was still struggling with her decision over the tea set.

"I must have dropped my gloves, Myra. Excuse me just a minute, he said, as he walked back, leaving the girl alone with the old woman.

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The machine sped down the street, and Varney walked into the curio shop once more. After a few minutes, however, he quietly left the place and hurried to a telephone pay station. He up a number and was soon delivering a message that all was well.

"Good," came the snarling reply. "I had mistrusted you Varney. Now I can with your task and I shall reward you as well as the others, for at last we have victory completely within our grasp."

The Varney returned to the street, to walk back to the curio shop. A frantic message on the telephone greeted him there. Mrs. Maynard had found no trace of Myra and begged him to notify the police at once. The conversation was abruptly terminated by hysterical sobbing, as the miserable mother gave way to her fright and tears.

Varney hung up the receiver, thanked the proper party for his courtesy, and walked out of the store. He turned the next corner and climbed into his own automobile which had strangely made its appearance there.

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But the deadly draught suddenly took its final effect, and the woman fell headlong to the floor, before the horrified girl.

The door opened slowly and the two muffled figures slipped in.

"The brothers have gone to get the Master, whispered Varney to Pedro.

"Now we must use the pneumatic pump!"

The other walked toward Myra, telling her: "We are trying to save you, but you must let us hypnotize you first."

Myra objected, but the man had caught her about the shoulders and waist, Varney, disglazed, saw the body of the dead woman under the bed, out of sight. Now he turned, and as his companion held Myra's head, and she drew forth a small, steel, spring, which he clasped under Myra's hair, at the base of the skull, the girl tried to resist the anaesthetic gas, but she soon in a cataleptic state.

"The sound of an automobile was heard outside."

"Now, beware the Master," said Varney, as they stretched the girl upon the bed. "That clasp on the forehead is a hypnotic cataleptic, produces suspended animation. He will believe any lie you tell."

Even as he spoke, the Master, accompanied by another of the Black Order, entered the room.

"Where is the woman?" he asked.

"She has gone to tell you of her success," said Varney, "but, at last you have succeeded."

The Master regarded the rigid form of the girl, felt her pulse, placed his ear to her bosom, and nodded approvingly. As he heard no flutter, he raised the body of the dead woman, and his eyes danced in wicked glee.

"You have done well, Varney, and I shall reward you for this. Bring in the sack and needle!" he called to the man outside. The member obeyed, with a large gunny sack, a pair of heavy twine, and some needles.

"Now, sew her into that," cried the Master, "and we will dispose of the body in such a manner that we will be sure."

The Master had walked to the window, as the other waited, the latter on the table and sat down upon a deplorable chair before it. Inverting the tumbler, she gazed fixedly into the blue one, which began to radiate brilliant lights as she applied the mental strength of concentration taught her by Aiden. Dimly within the glass she caught a vision—it was the face of two men.

As she peered closer she saw that it was Payson Aiden, talking to a blindfolded man.

Here, indeed, was a curious cross-current of telepathic influences.

"If I could only reach him," she murmured. "I know he is in his laboratory—"

But she was interrupted by the entrance of the woman who had made her captive. The woman was carrying a small tray, on which were two cups of milk and some sandwiches.

Myra hid the tumbler, for future expedition under the table, as the woman turned her back to carefully shut the door.

"Here, my dear," were her suave words, "a little nourishment. Don't be nervous, for no one will harm you, if you remain quiet for a few hours."

"Get out of here!" cried the woman, and backed timidly toward the old bed in the corner of the room.

She was not aware that Arthur Varney, well disguised in an old coat and a mask, was conversing earnestly with Pedro outside.

"Read this," the note, said Varney. "We will get rid of the woman somehow, or else go to the electric chair." The man winced at the last two words.

Varney and the other walked to the door and opened it. They entered it, to be greeted angrily by the woman, who, even more frightened at the muffled figures, controlled herself from screaming with difficulty.

"Get out of here!" cried the woman, angrily. She rushed at them and advanced them back through the doorway, but as she followed them outside to barate them she did not notice the

and a slight moisture was deposited on the glass from her delicate breathing.

Varney tried to rouse her. It was evident that her coma was the result of hypnosis or a drug—he could not ascertain which. The psychic, still acting under the influence of the tremendous occult excitement, which had seemed to guide his every move, now sank into a faint and drew forth his dictionary. His finger reached a word and remained there.

"Read this!" he cried. "Read it!"

Mrs. Maynard reached over his shoulder and pronounced the word his trembling finger indicated.

"Pneumonia!" she exclaimed. "What does that word mean, doctor?"

Aiden started.

"Why, that's in the neck. I wonder—"

He ran to the side of the girl, reaching around to discover the clasp. He removed it, with an exclamation of triumph, a shriek of foreboding, and snapped his fingers commandingly.

"Oh!" and the girl awakened with a start. "Where am I?"

Myra looked toward her joyously, as Aiden caught the soft hand in his. Her return to the land of the living was an unexpected joy to Myra as to any one else.

And the failure of Pedro to consummate the well-laid scheme of the Master was at this instant being punished within the council room of the Black Order. Varney had escaped suspicion by a hair's breadth. But the other man sank back lifeless before the terrible occult power of the Master's extended hands, who had foolishly trusted a knife against the evil ruler, to ward off his fury.

There was only one result—another scoundrel had been sent to the gallows. And the Master's malcontent was more set than ever upon the death of the rescued Myra.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)

CHAPTER LX. At the Curio Shop.

Myra was sitting in the library engrossed in a Cosmopolitan Magazine when her mother entered the room.

"My dear, you are neglecting your music; you simply must practice now, for you have had entirely too many distractions of late," was the maternal reproof.

"All right, dear," but there was a sigh as she laid aside the story. "I was so glad to read something to take my mind off our own tragedies here in the house. And my music always makes me sad, of late."

Myra went to the piano, and was diligently running scales, with a surprising skill in the slender white fingers, as Arthur Varney was admitted to the house.

He passed Willis, to enter the music room. As he stood up, with unusual awkwardness, he brushed past an antique vase which stood upon the table near the door. Indeed, an observer might have deduced that it was an intentional accident, but he did not enter the room. Varney was picking up the fragments with simulated mortification.

"What a clumsy fool I am!" he exclaimed.

Myra had followed the butler, and she shook her head in disparagement of the loss.

"It is nothing, Arthur," she answered to his protestations of regret. "Just some old piece of furniture brought in from the Orient. The house is full of them, and one more or less, won't be missed."

Mrs. Maynard had entered, and she eyed Myra's indifference. But Varney was strangely apologetic.

"I insist that you allow me to replace it," he persisted. "And, by the way, I remember an old curio store which I passed this morning. It had just such a vase in the window. It will feel very right now and let me replace the loss."

He was so insistent about it that finally, to make him feel better, Mrs. Maynard and Myra agreed to ride down with him. The butler brought the car to the automobile, and in a few minutes they were riding toward the old shop.

There was as much of a curio as its contents, this old place.

"I have often passed it," said Myra, as the car drew before the door of the shop. "And now I am really glad that you brought us down, Arthur, for I have always wanted to browse around among the clutter of old tables, and chinaware, and tinware."

The three of them entered, while the chauffeur drew his machine up a little nearer the doorway, for their convenience on the return.

There he was laughing at the "rich folks" for their foolish interest in what he termed "old junk." The aged proprietor of the place led them to the rooms listlessly. He seemed absolutely uninterested in the possibility of a sale, and he returned to his account book, as they walked from one antique to the other.

Varney, unobserved by the other, looked at his watch and then peered cautious-

ly into the rear room as though expecting some one. The place was empty, however. A large door opened upon an alleyway on the back of the building, and it seemed from Varney's manner that this portal was important in his scheming.

He rejoined Myra and her mother, who were discussing some cracked chinaware on a weather-beaten mahogany table.

"I prefer Wedgwood ware," insisted Myra, while her mother objected and tried to make up her mind which dusty tea set she wished to choose from those on the table.

Varney heard a footfall in the rear of the store.

"There are some Wedgwood pieces in that back room, Myra," he said, just as an old woman, dressed in black silk, and wearing a quaint bonnet appeared in the doorway of the other room. She gave him a quick signal—clenched fists, with upturned thumbs, pressed against her cheeks—and Varney knew that his confederates had arrived.

The old woman, who had entered from the alleyway, now turned back into the rear room, and as Myra entered it to inspect the Wedgwood ware she was busy stooping over a table to examine a spangled fan.

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"If I could only reach him," she murmured. "I know he is in his laboratory—"

But she was interrupted by the entrance of the woman who had made her captive. The woman was carrying a small tray, on which were two cups of milk and some sandwiches.

Myra hid the tumbler, for future expedition under the table, as the woman turned her back to carefully shut the door.

"Here, my dear," were her suave words, "a little nourishment. Don't be nervous, for no one will harm you, if you remain quiet for a few hours."

"Get out of here!" cried the woman, and backed timidly toward the old bed in the corner of the room.

She was not aware that Arthur Varney, well disguised in an old coat and a mask, was conversing earnestly with Pedro outside.

"Read this," the note, said Varney. "We will get rid of the woman somehow, or else go to the electric chair." The man winced at the last two words.

Varney and the other walked to the door and opened it. They entered it, to be greeted angrily by the woman, who, even more frightened at the muffled figures, controlled herself from screaming with difficulty.

"Get out of here!" cried the woman, angrily. She rushed at them and advanced them back through the doorway, but as she followed them outside to barate them she did not notice the

CHAPTER LXI. Payson Aiden's New Physic.

The physician's laboratory work had been interrupted just when he was getting deejest interested in it, by the arrival of a strange looking young man.

"I am a psychic," the newcomer told him, "and was sent to you by your friend, Dr. Burnham, who has tried a number of experiments with me. He said that you would surely give me a trial, and that we might do some interesting work together."

"What is your peculiar line?" asked Aiden, forcing himself to be agreeable, for important as his work might be, he realized that these unexpected opportunities frequently turned out to be of value.

"I am extremely busy today, and would like to have you come around some time when we can work better together."

"That's just it," said the visitor. "I was going to leave for the West tomorrow, but Dr. Burnham insisted that you might be able to help me in my work, and make it of interest to us both. I have discovered that I am especially strong along the line of telepathic haunts. I am a sensitive, although I have never done much else, and I have hidden objects, rid over



MYRA WAS TERROR-STRICKEN

CHAPTER LXII. The Master's Plan.

The Master's plan was to use the young man's telepathic powers to locate the woman who had fled from the curio shop. He had arranged for the young man to be brought to the city, and to be placed in a room near the curio shop. The young man, who was a sensitive, was to be used to locate the woman who had fled from the curio shop. The Master's plan was to use the young man's telepathic powers to locate the woman who had fled from the curio shop. He had arranged for the young man to be brought to the city, and to be placed in a room near the curio shop. The young man, who was a sensitive, was to be used to locate the woman who had fled from the curio shop.

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